



Pictured l-r: Caron Gentry; Patrick Andelic; Richard Johnson (QMUL); Stephanie L. Young (Exec Director, When we all Vote); Philip Davies (co-Chair American Politics Group); Brian Ward; Christina Tribble (US Cultural Attaché, London).

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UK and US political experiences shared during public lecture

An advisor to former US President Barak Obama was among the speakers at a Northumbria University event exploring the current shared challenges within UK and US politics.

Stephanie L. Young served as Associate Communications Director and Senior Public Engagement Advisor in the Office of Public Engagement during the Obama administration and is currently Executive Director of When We All

Vote – a non-partisan voting initiative launched by Michelle Obama in 2018.

She was special guest at a public event on Monday night, exploring issues of democracy, media, and accountability in modern US and UK politics, and considering the challenges for voters in both countries over the coming years.

Hosted by Northumbria University in collaboration with the US Embassy, the American Politics Group of the UK Political Studies Association, and the British Association for American Studies, the event featured a thought-provoking blend of discussion and short presentations.

The highlight of the evening was a roundtable featuring Stephanie L. Young and Richard Johnson, Senior Lecturer in US Politics and Policy at Queen Mary's University, London. It was chaired by [Professor Caron Gentry, Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor for Arts, Design, and Social Sciences](#) at Northumbria and an expert in international relations and politics.

The event was compered by [Professor in American Studies Brian Ward](#) and built on Northumbria University's strong links with the US and reputation as a leader in American Studies research.

Professor Ward said: "Over the past decade Northumbria has become one of the UK's foremost centres for research and teaching in US history, politics, literature, and popular culture.

"These kinds of public events help us to showcase what we do, and how that work can help us to understand the contemporary world better."

Northumbria has long-standing links with the US Embassy and welcomed former US Ambassador Matthew W. Barzun back in 2014 – his first UK visit outside London.

Speaking about the Embassy's involvement in co-hosting the event, Cultural Attaché Christina Tribble of the US Embassy said: "US Embassy London is delighted to be partnering with Northumbria University. Conversations around democracy, voting and civic engagement could not be more important or timely."

Stephanie L. Young has worked in various communications roles ranging from

TV newsrooms to non-profits, political campaigns and the highest offices in federal government, the United States Congress and the Obama White House.

In 2020 as the Chief Officer for Communications and Culture, Stephanie led When We All Vote's messaging and cultural strategy that helped register over 500,000 voters— the largest increase in voter participation in over 120 years.

She helped recruit over 400 artists, athletes, and influencers to help the campaign reach over 220 million individuals on social media.

Speaking about her visit to the North East and involvement as special guest in Monday's event, Stephanie said: "The US just saw the second highest youth turnout rate for a midterm election in the past 30 years. Young people ultimately decided the outcomes of key races across the nation and played a critical role in the victories of Senators, Governors, and countless other state and local officials.

"While we celebrate these victories and the nation's general rejection of extremism and disinformation, we continue to face challenges to protect voting rights, ending gerrymandering, and building a democracy that's representative of all.

"The state of democracy in the US, the UK, and across the globe is being tested like never before, and I was honoured to partake in this important discussion at Northumbria University."

In addition to the roundtable discussion, Northumbria's [Dr Patrick Andelic](#), co-editor of the newly published book *Midterms and Mandates*, also gave a talk about "Why Mid-Terms Matter."

Northumbria University has one of the [largest research teams in Europe dedicated to the study of the US and wider Americas](#), and one of the largest concentrations of US specialists working outside North America. BA (Hons) degree programmes in [American Studies](#), [English and American Studies](#), and [History and American Studies](#) attract students with a passion for US politics, history and culture.

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